Shortage of coal for small/medium scale coal consuming industries

231. SHRI DEVDAS APTE: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is acute shortage of coal for small/medium scale coal consuming industries in the country and the power sector, consuming almost all the coal produced domestically, is enjoying priority of allocation and preference of price;

(b) whether small and medium scale coal consuming industries, especially those which mushroomed in coal producing States in the past, are meeting their demand by buying coal from 'market' at more than three times the price paid by power sector; and

(c) the steps proposed to get sufficient coal to such industries to meet the demand?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COAL (DR. DASARI NARAYAN RAO): (a) Around 80% of coal produced by Coal India Limited is consumed by power sector and in view of criticality of power sector in the country, highest priority is given to the power sector in supply of coal. This has resulted in shortage of coal availability to small and medium industries. Because of high prices of coal in international markets expected import of coal has also not materialized further increasing the demand for coal from power sector.

(b) In order to equitably distribute available coal, a transparent method of sale of coal through e-auction has been started by Coal India Limited. The average price of e-auction coal is about 56% higher than the notified price and not three times the price paid by power sector. Apart from this 5 million tonnes of coal is being released for small scale industries through State Government notified undertakings and NCCF at concessional price (20% above notified price).

(c) Following steps have been taken to increase availability of coal:

(i) CIL has been requested to increase its production.

(ii) Power sector has been requested to import 13.45 million tonnes of coal so that additional indigenous coal becomes available to small and medium industries.

(iii) Expediting allotment of captive coal blocks to private and public sector companies in order to enhance coal production.

(iv) 10 million tonnes of coal is offered under E-auction sale during the year 2005-06 to increase availability of coal to the non-linked consumers.

Ferry service between Mumbai and Karachi

†*232. SHRI AJAY MAROO: Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal for starting a passenger-service for the passengers between Mumbai and Karachi through sea route;

(b) whether any discussion has taken place between Governments of both the countries; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI T.R. BAALU):(a) and (b) No, Sir.

(c) Does not arise.

Unemployed engineering/medical Graduates

*233. SHRI T.T.V. DHINAKARAN: Will the Minister of LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

(a) the number of umemployed engineering and medical graduates in the country with State-wise, break-up;

(b) whether unemployment among technical/medical graduates is on the increase in the recent years; and

(c) the steps taken to reduce unemployment among youths belonging to this category?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI K. CHANDRA SEKHAR RAO): (a) State-wise authentic data on the number of unemployed engineers and medical graduates are not available. However, number of engineers and medical graduates and postgraduates, all of whom are not necessarily unemployed, registered with the employment exchanges as on December, 2003 was of the order of 2.2 lakh and 0.48 lakh respectively.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.